

REMARKS

Amendments

In order to expedite prosecution of the current invention, claims 2 and 14 have been canceled and claim 15 has been amended. No new matter has been added by the claim amendments herein.

Rejections under 35 USC § 103(a)

Claims 1, 3-5, 7-10, 12-13, 15 and 18-19 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over United States Patent No. 5,460,592 to Langton et al. (Langton et al.”) in view of United States Patent No. 5,863,790 to Bolea (“Bolea”). Claim 4 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over United States Patent No. 6,106,455 to Kan in view of the combination of Langton et al. and Bolea. These rejections are respectfully traversed and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

First, Applicants respectfully submit that it is impermissible within the framework of 35 U.S.C. §103 to pick and choose from any one reference only so much of it as will support a given position to the exclusion of other parts necessary to the full appreciation of what such reference fairly suggests to one skilled in the art. *Bausch & Lomb, Inc. v. Barnes-Hind/Hydrocurve, Inc.*, 796 F.2d 443 (Fed. Cir. 1986). (emphasis added).

In the Office Action dated March 15, 2006 ("Office Action"), the Examiner states "it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the medical arts at the time the invention was made to use a time period of at least two hours for dry heat sterilization for the device of Langton et al. as set forth in Bolea to ensure the device is properly sterilized." However, Bolea also states in column 1, lines 39-42 that *dry heat sterilization involves* exposing the devices being sterilized *to temperatures in a range of approximately 180°C or higher* for at least two hours. In the present invention, Applicants disclose in claim 1 *that the radioactive seeds are subjected to dry heat at a temperature of at least 140°C* for a minimum of 2 hours to effect sterilization. Accordingly, even though Bolea discloses the minimum of 2 hours to effect sterilization, Bolea does not disclose, teach, or suggest using a temperature that is below 180°C to effect sterilization. Hence, the temperature and time requirements of independent claim 1 in the present invention would not have been obvious to one skilled in the art in view of Langton et al. to Bolea.

Furthermore, it is well settled in case law that prior patents such as Langton et al. and Bolea are references only for what they clearly disclose or suggest. Additionally, it is not proper use of a patent as a reference to modify its structure to one which prior art references do not suggest. *In re Randol and Redford*, 425 F.2d 1268, 165 U.S.P.Q. 586, 588 (C.C.P.A. 1970). A reference must be considered not just for what it expressly teaches, but also for what it fairly suggests to one who is unaware of the claimed invention. *In re Baird*, 16 F.3d 380, (Fed. Cir. 1994).

Accordingly, as the Examiner has indicated on page 2 of the Office Action, Langton et al. does not suggest, disclose or teach a time of two hours for sterilization. Langton et al. teaches a time of one-hour to sterilize a seed train. Therefore, one skilled in the art would be discouraged from increasing the one-hour time for sterilization in Langton et al. because the seed train is sterilized and stiffened in one hour. Additionally, it would not be practical if one skilled in the art were to continue to apply dry heat at 180°C as disclosed in Bolea to the seed train in Langton et al. if the seed train in Langton et al. was already sterilized in one hour. Accordingly, one skilled in the art would not seek to improve Langton et al. by continuing to prolong the time when sterilization of the seed train has already occurred, i.e. 1-hour to 2-hours.

In accordance with the aforementioned, Langton et al. in view of Bolea teaches away from the present invention. Teaching away' simply means teaching a solution that would not lead to the claimed subject matter. As noted by the Federal Circuit:

A reference may be said to teach away when a person of ordinary skill, upon [examining] the reference would be discouraged from following the path set out in the reference, or would be led in a direction divergent from the path that was taken by the applicant.

***Para-Ordnance Mfg. v. SGS Importers Int'l*, 73 F.3d 1085 (Fed. Cir. 1995).**

In the *Para-Ordnance* decision, the Federal Circuit clearly states that the prior art need only teach other, divergent, solutions to be deemed to teach away from an invention.

Thus, by teaching positively towards certain embodiments or features as being

important or preferred, the art provides a motivation for the person skilled in the art to go in a particular direction. If that direction leads towards subject matter outside the scope of the claims at issue, then it constitutes a “teaching away”. Applicants maintain that the person skilled in the art, even if assumed to be contemplating improvements of Langton et al. in view of Bolea, would focus on the specific teachings in Langton et al. of embodiments taught to be important, and be motivated to improve those elements.

Langton et al. discloses sterilizing a seed train in one hour. As stated by the Examiner in the Office Action, Langton et al. does not disclose, teach, or suggest using a time of at least two hours for sterilization. Bolea discloses a system for determining efficacy of a sterilization cycle. Bolea gives no mention of applying dry heat sterilization to radioactive seeds. The Examiner merely attempts to pick and choose an unimportant item in Bolea, dry heat sterilization time, and use this single item as evidence of obviousness when viewed with Langton et al. As stated earlier, one skilled in the art would be discouraged from increasing the one-hour time for sterilization in Langton et al. because the seed train is sterilized and stiffened in one hour. Therefore, it would not be practical if one skilled in the art were to continue to apply dry heat at 180°C as disclosed in Bolea to the seed train in Langton et al. if the seed train in Langton et al. was already sterilized in one hour.

Furthermore, Applicants respectfully disclose that claims 3-5, 7-10, 12-13, 15 and 18-19 are dependent upon an independent claim or introduce further limitations of another dependent claim that is dependent on claim 1. In other words, dependent claims 3-5, 7-10, 12-13, 15 and 18-19 will stand or fall based on independent claim 1. Accordingly,

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Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for claims 3-5, 7-10, 12-13, 15 and 18-19.

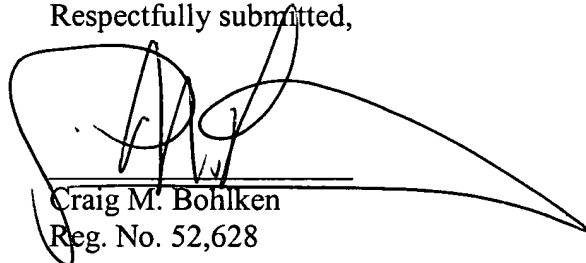
Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdrawal the rejections for claims 3-5, 7-10, 12-13, 15 and 18-19 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) and direct that claims 3-5, 7-10, 12-13, 15 and 18-19 be allowed.

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CONCLUSION

Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 1, 3-5, 7-10, 12-13, 15, and 18-19 remain pending. Applicants submit that all outstanding issues have been addressed, and that claims 1, 3-5, 7-10, 12-13, 15, and 18-19 are in condition for allowance, which action is earnestly solicited. Authorization is hereby given to charge any fee which may be due in connection with this communication to Deposit Account 502-665.

Respectfully submitted,



Craig M. Bohlken
Reg. No. 52,628

GE Healthcare, Inc.
101 Carnegie Center
Princeton, NJ 08540
Phone (609) 514-6530
Fax (609) 514-6572
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